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RUEHJM/AMCONSUL JERUSALEM PRIORITY 9528
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RHMFISS/COMSOCEUR VAIHINGEN GE PRIORITY
RHMFIUU/COMSIXTHFLT PRIORITY

UNCLAS TEL AVIV 000868

SIPDIS

STATE FOR NEA, NEA/IPA, NEA/PPD

WHITE HOUSE FOR PRESS OFFICE, SIT ROOM
NSC FOR NEA STAFF

SECDEF WASHDC FOR USDP/ASD-PA/ASD-ISA
HQ USAF FOR XXXX
DA WASHDC FOR SASA
JOINT STAFF WASHDC FOR PA
CDR USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL FOR POLAD/USIA ADVISOR
COMSQCQR VAIHINGEN GE FOR PAO/POLAD
COMSIXTHFLT FOR 019

JERUSALEM ALSO ICD
LONDON ALSO FOR HKANONA AND POL
PARIS ALSO FOR POL
ROME FOR MFO

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E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [OPRC](#) [KMDR](#) [IS](#)

SUBJECT: ISRAEL MEDIA REACTION

SUBJECTS COVERED IN THIS REPORT:

[1](#)1. Mideast

[1](#)2. Iran

Key stories in the media:

Former U.S. President Jimmy Carter was quoted as saying in an

interview with Ha'aretz on Sunday that peace cannot be achieved without talking to all the relevant people and that he intends to check Hamas leader Khaled Mashal's willingness to accept the Arab League peace initiative. Ha'aretz reported that Carter visited Sderot and Ashkelon. Carter called on the U.S. to start a direct dialogue with Iran. The media quoted Carter as saying that Syria must be brought into the peace process. Ha'aretz quoted U.S. sources as saying on Monday the Shin Bet declined to assist Carter during his visit and reported that the sources described the snub as an "unprecedented" breach between the Shin Bet and the U.S. Secret Service.

The Jerusalem Post reported that there is growing pessimism in the Israeli defense establishment concerning the fate of the two IDF reservists, Eldad Regev and Ehud Goldwasser, who were kidnapped by Hizbullah in July 2006. The conclusion was reached after analysis of recent comments made by Hizbullah leader Hassan Nasrallah. The paper also carried speculation printed in the Lebanese paper an-Nahar that Israel is no longer pursuing a prisoner swap since it is convinced the pair are no longer alive.

Leading media reported that yesterday Qatar's prime minister, Hamad bin Jasim bin Jabir al-Thani, urged FM Tzipi Livni to end Israel's "crippling blockade of Gaza out of respect for the difficult humanitarian situation" and to accelerate negotiations on a final-status arrangement. The Emir of Qatar, Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani, hosted Livni for lunch at his palace after holding a formal meeting also attended by his PM, Sheikh Hamad bin Jasssem. Omani Foreign Minister Yousef Bin Alawi Bin Abdulla and Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan also attended the lunch. Livni told the emir that Israel was interested in enlisting the Arab world, and especially the Gulf states, to help the Palestinian Authority advance in the peace process. Media reported that Syria, Iran, and Lebanon condemned Livni's visit to Qatar.

In her speech at the Doha Forum, FM Livni declared that Gaza militant groups' ongoing conflict with Israel is frustrating Palestinian ambitions for statehood. Livni also called on Arab states not to view the Israeli-Palestinian conflict as the cause of extremism. Moments after delivering her address, Livni traded barbs over the nature of Israeli democracy with MK Ahmed Tibi, who attended the conference. In a question and answer session following the speech, Tibi (United Arab List-Ta'al) asked for an opportunity to respond to Livni's comments, and told her, "Israel is an apartheid state. How can you speak about democracy when you speak about a Jewish state?"

Ha'aretz reported that the U.S. administration intends to give the Senate Intelligence Committee an account of the nuclear ties between North Korea and Syria for the first time on April 22. However, Ha'aretz reported that senior IDF officers have warned that the release of any information containing details of the IAF strike in Syria last September could increase tension between Israel and Syria. The Jerusalem Post reported that the public status of the hearing is still undecided.

Leading media reported on strongly worded travel advisory issued by the Counter-Terrorism Bureau to Israeli citizens to stay out of the Sinai.

Maariv reported that the 20 residents of the unauthorized settler outpost Mevo Horon Tzafon (Mevo Horon North) were quietly removed. The newspaper reported that in exchange the government allowed the Yesha Council of Settlements in the Territories to expand construction in other settlements.

Major media reported that Defense Minister Ehud Barak decided yesterday to renew the supply of diesel gas to Gaza for the Palestinian power plant there starting Wednesday.

Bank of Israel Governor Stanley Fischer was quoted as saying in an interview with The Jerusalem Post that maintaining prolonged and significant growth of the Israeli economy is critical to Israel's physical well-being and security.

Ha'aretz highlighted the conciliatory message that President Shimon Peres gave the Poles during his visit to the extermination camp of Treblinka.

Yediot quoted Silvio Berlusconi, the frontrunner in the Italian legislative elections, as saying yesterday that his first visit abroad as PM would be to Israel.

Leading media reported that Moshe Rosenfeld, one of Israel's best known journalists and a former editor of Maariv, passed away on Monday, aged 93.

Major media reported that the Qatar-based Aljazeera-TV has agreed to discuss its coverage of the Israeli-Arab conflict with Israel.

1. Mideast:

Summary:

The independent, left-leaning Ha'aretz editorialized: "In terms of results, at the end of the day, [Jimmy] Carter beats out any of those who ostracize him. For the peace agreement with Egypt, he deserves the respect reserved for royalty for the rest of his life."

Diplomatic correspondent Ben Caspit wrote on page one of the popular, pluralist Maariv: "The outpost that was evacuated yesterday is the first swallow that heralds the arrival of the king [i.e. President Bush]. This was no actual step, this is no change in policy."

Eshkol Nevo, a young author and grandson of the late prime minister Levi Eshkol, wrote in the mass-circulation, pluralist Yediot Aharonot: "Might [negotiations with Syria] not bring durable quiet along Israel's entire northern border and change the entire balance of forces in the Middle East?"

Block Quotes:

I. "Our Debt to Jimmy Carter"

The independent, left-leaning Ha'aretz editorialized (4/15): "The government of Israel is boycotting Jimmy Carter, the 39th President of the United States, during his visit here this week.... The boycott will not be remembered as a glorious moment in this government's history. Jimmy Carter has dedicated his life to humanitarian missions, to peace, to promoting democratic elections, and to better understanding between enemies throughout the world.... But Israelis have not liked him since he wrote the book 'Palestine: Peace not Apartheid' Israel is not ready for such comparisons, even though the situation begs it.... In the peace agreement with Egypt, 30 years ago, Israel agreed to 'full autonomy' for the occupied territories, not to settle there. These promises have been forgotten by Israel, but Carter remembers. Whether Carter's approach to conflict resolution is considered by the Israeli government as appropriate or defeatist, no one can take away from the former U.S. president his international standing, nor the fact that he brought Israel and Egypt to a signed peace that has since held. Carter's method, which says that it is necessary to talk with every one, has still not proven to be any less successful than the method that calls for boycotts and air strikes. In terms of results, at the end of the day, Carter beats out any of those who ostracize him. For the peace agreement with Egypt, he deserves the respect reserved for royalty for the rest of his life."

II. "The Swallow that Heralds the Arrival of the King"

Diplomatic correspondent Ben Caspit wrote on page one of the popular, pluralist Maariv (4/15): "There is no reason to be amazed by the quiet evacuation of [the settler outposts] 'Mevo Horon North' or QMevo Horon South yesterday. What does this evacuation mean? Nothing. Mainly the imminent arrival of George Bush. The outpost that was evacuated yesterday is the first swallow that heralds the arrival of the king. This was no actual step, this is no change in policy, this was not and will not be a courageous decision that will implement the recommendations of the Talia Sasson committee, the committee that Ariel Sharon established and which pointed out all the failures of Israeli governments over the last few decades....

The settlers will continue to play cat and mouse with the state, there will be many more 'arrangements' for 'voluntary evacuation' or 'pretend evacuation' or 'evacuation against Talia Sasson' but nothing real will happen. For this to happen, we need a leadership that will decide if we are here or there, and then carry it out. There is no such thing in Israel and there never will be."

III. "Weaning Ourselves of the Palestinians"

Eshkol Nevo, a young author and grandson of the late prime minister Levi Eshkol, wrote in the mass-circulation, pluralist Yediot Aharonot(4/15): "For over 15 years most of Israel's diplomatic efforts have been directed at one goal: achieving an agreement to divide the land with the representatives of the Palestinians people.... Only one thing has been missing during all those years: peace.... Israel has been signaling its willingness to reach a solution of peace to its border conflict with Israel.... The Syrians are no friends of the Jews... [However] we may not be holding negotiations with Syria because we are addicted to the Palestinians?

Is it possible that we have become accustomed to the convenience of hiccupping negotiations that do not demand any price from us.... Might [negotiations with Syria] not bring lasting peace along Israel's entire northern border and change the entire balance of forces in the Middle East?"

12. Iran:

Summary:

The conservative, independent Jerusalem Post editorialized: "Those gathering this week in Shanghai should not delude themselves into believing that the rapacious Islamist regime in Tehran does not also threaten everything they hold dear."

Block Quotes:

"The Mullah Minuet"

The conservative, independent Jerusalem Post editorialized (4/15): "It was a small news item, easily unnoticed, part of a protracted series of deceptions: 'Monday's scheduled meeting in Vienna between Iranian nuclear negotiator Gholamreza Aghazadeh and the UN's nuclear watchdog Mohamed ElBaradei has been postponed.' One step back in the minuet. Meanwhile, the Iranian Foreign Ministry announced that it would 'propose a package of solutions' aimed at 'convergence' with international proposals offering Iran nuclear technology in return for ending its pursuit of nuclear weapons. One step forward -- ostensibly.... No one in Shanghai will suggest an international ban on weapons sales to Iran. There will be no talk of any air or sea embargo. Still, the great powers will probably express 'disquiet' over the installation of hundreds, if not thousands, more centrifuges at the Natanz uranium enrichment facility.... There are too many sticks and not enough carrots, some of the diplomats in Shanghai will claim. But Iran has time and again rejected generous international offers of nuclear fuel and technology in return for abandoning its bomb.... Those gathering this week in Shanghai should not delude themselves into believing that the rapacious Islamist regime in Tehran does not also threaten everything they hold dear. Iran already has all of Israel well within its missile range, and still it extends its delivery capabilities."

JONES